A DECLARATION

Of His Highness

The Lord Protector,

AND THE

PARLIAMENT

OF THE

Commonwealth of *England, Scotland* and *Ireland*,

for a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation in the Three Nations.

Which have been the outgoings of our God for his People in this our Generation, that none as Men, but must say, It is marvellous in our eyes; and none as Christians, but must cry out, It is the Lords doing; He hath always been a ready help in time of need, and whosoever did his good pleasure seek his face in vain, Neither did he ever

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deaf ear to the voice of their weepings. Who can utter the mighty Acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praises? But Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider; for in the midst of such unequalled and signal Mercies, how great hath been, and is our ingratitude and unfruitfulness? Verily such, that nothing can be greater, but that unexhausted Mercy, which hitherto hath continued us. Should the Lord say unto us, as once he did unto Ephraim, Ephraim is joyned unto Idols let him alone. That heavy sentence would be but our desert. As insensibility is our crime, so it might be justly made our punishment: for who has been melted by mercies, who has been broken by judgments? Ah sinful Nation! a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward: why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. As these sad words do characterize us as truly as they did those of Judah, to whom they were first spoken; so if that sad Denunciation should also be our doom, we could not yet but acknowledge, The Lord is righteous

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in all his wayes, and holy in all his works. How deeply have we grieved our good God, in not mourning as we ought, even as one that mourneth for his first-born, for that ignorance, prophanenes and barrennes that is so ripe amongst us, even under such rich means of Knowledge, Reformation and Grace, in not being humble under, nor making a sanctified use of those Rebukes we have of late received; But rather charging such miscarriages upon Instruments, chiefly, if not only, wherein any Individual hath helped to fill up the measure of those sins after which such Judgments were to follow.

In not improving Mercies so fully as might have been to his Glory, from whom alone they were received.

In the sad neglect and want of Activity, Resolution, and Integrity, in Magistrates, and others imployed therein, for the punishment and suppression of Vice, and crying Enormities.

In the abominable Blasphemies vented and spread of late through the Apostasie of, and the abuse of Liberty, by many professing Religion.

In that little love and tenderness which is even amongst Professors themselves towards one another, who whilst they contend for things disputable, lose that which is certain, even Charity, which is the bond of perfectnesse, **and without which they become as** sounding Brasse, or a tinkling Cimball: **To love one another is Christs new Commandment, the very Badge of his Disciples;** By this shall all men know that you are my Disciples, if you have love one to another; **in allowing difference in Forms, more power to divide Christians, than Agreements in Fundamentals hath to unite them; one of the dangerousest and fruitfullest seed that hath been sown by the Enemies One.**

In not being truly sensible, that though the Lord in the depths of his Wisdom and righteous Judgment, hath for some years last past been overturning severall Authorities in these Nations, and hath, as it were, been pouring them out from vessel to vessel: He hath yet been pleased ever since his People publickly contended for his Truths, still to set up Rulers, who have allowed them the free exercise and profession of them.

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In that Atheistical and [illegible]
ry, too commonly amongst us, where by not only the form, but power of Godliness is reproached, and accounted as a vile thing; but also too many have fallen from their first love; and others, Laodicean-like, esteem themselves rich, and to have need of nothing, when indeed they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: sins which are the higher aggravated, by being committed in Countreys where the glorious Light of the Gospel shines clearest.

In being more dissatisfied that we have not obtained all we aimed at, than thankful that we have obtained so much, as through mercy we now enjoy.

All which, with other the grievous sins of these three Nations, call aloud upon all the good People in them, to lye low in the sight of our offended God, and by prayer and humiliation (a way which in our deepest distresses we have found both our duty and comfort to tread in) to seek to appease his Wrath; And that he will for his own Names sake be pleased to remove whatever accursed thing there is amongst us, and that as he is our God, so we may be his People.

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That he will inſtruct the Counſels, and defeat the Deſigns of all thoſe that labour to exalt themſelves, againſt the Intereſt of his Son and his People.

That he will be pleaſed in a moſt eſpecial manner, to vouchſafe his Preſence to thoſe who are intruſted with the manngement of the Affairs of theſe Nations:

That as he is the mighty Counſellor in himſelf, ſo alſo that he would appear ſuch experimentally unto Them.

That he would in all things ſpirit them to the Work unto which they are called, And give them Unity amongſt themſelves, even the beſt Unity, that of the Spirit, In the beſt Bond, that of Peace; That as they are a People abounding in Mercies, ſo they may abound in Returns.

And that at laſt through the unwearied goodneſs of our God, theſe three Nations, after ſuch memorable Revolutions, may be ſetled upon the ſure foundations of Truth, Mercy and Peace, And his People henceforth, being delivered from their Enemies, may ſerve Him without fear, in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs before Him all the dayes of their lives.

It

[illegible] the Lord Protector, and the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, Doth for the ends and purposes aforesaid, Enact and Ordain, That the Thursday, being the Thirtieth day of October next, for a day of solemn Humiliation and seeking the Face of God, through the Mediation of Christ, in all Places within England, Scotland and Ireland; And do therefore hereby incite and encourage all such whose hearts God shall perswade and make sensible of their duty, and of the Commonwealths present condition, that the day aforesaid be set apart by them, for the purposes aforesaid. And all persons whatsoever, are hereby enjoyned and required, to abstain from the works of their ordinary Calling, and from any Recreations, or other things against the fitting and due observation of that day. And all Fairs and Mercats are hereby prohibited to be kept upon that day, but may be proclaimed to be kept upon the day next following. And all Officers of Justice are hereby required to cause due observation to be had hereof: And the Ministers and Preachers of the respective Parishes

lyes and Congregations, are to take notice hereof: For which end, It is Ordered, That Copies of this Declaration be Printed, and sent into the several Parts of the three Nations, that the same may be published accordingly.

Tuesday the 23. of *September*, 1656.

ORdered by the Parliament, That this Declaration be forthwith Printed and Published.

HENRY SCOBELL,
Clerk of the Parliament.

Printed at LONDON, and Re-printed at EDINBURGH, by *Christopher Higgins*, in *Hart's-Close*, over against the *Trone-Church*, 1656.